



**Improved treatment of child victims/survivors of  
sexual abuse and exploitation in the Justice and  
Law enforcement sector in line with international  
standards**

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# Focus of Presentation

- The experience of Forum on Street Children- Ethiopia (FSCE) on its interventions aiming at improving the treatment of child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation in the legal and justice systems in line with international standards will be discussed

# Issues to be addressed

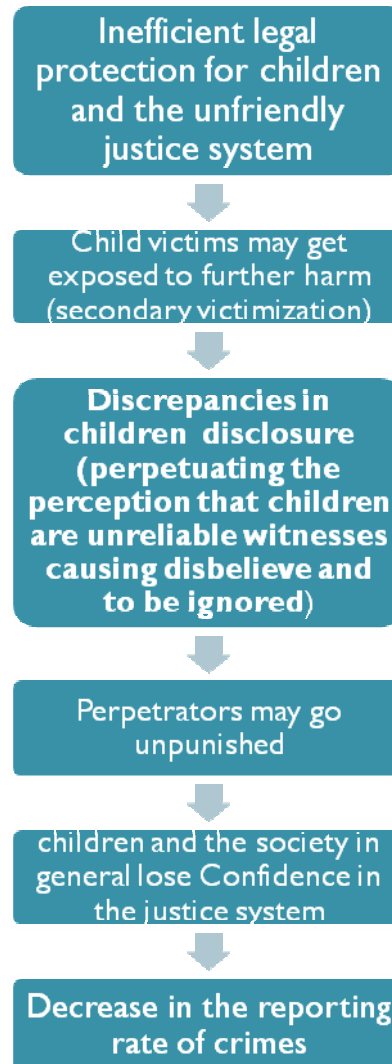
- International principles/ standards
- Review and reflections on features of pre-intervention, treatments for Child victims of Sexual abuse and Exploitation in the legal and justice sector in Ethiopia
- The Multi-Sectoral Model

# Background

- Reporting of SAEC cases: despite the soaring magnitude of the problem, SAEC is still a hidden or less reported crime in Ethiopia. Why?
  - Reluctance of children, families and communities to disclose the violent act owing to reasons related to avoiding sense of shame, fear of revenge by perpetrators or intentions to prevent family breakdown in cases of incest
  - Inefficient legal protection for children and the unfriendly justice system that makes the society in general to lose confidence in the justice system that in turn leads to decrease in the reporting rate of crimes

# Relationship b/n less reporting and inefficient legal protection for children and the unfriendly justice system

## How does it happen?



# International principles/ standards:

- Respect for child's view
- Right to be informed: to be provided with the relevant information that will enable the child victim and his/her legal representatives to make an informed decision
  - What happens at all the stages
  - What is expected of them when they testify (eg. about different ways they might be questioned)
  - When the hearings will take place

# **International principles/ standards:**

- Right to effective assistance
- Right to privacy
- Right to be treated a manner and environment that reflects child-sensitivity
- Non-discrimination
- Child participation: as an effective medium and important component in the protection of the child, the healing process of reintegration and social recovery
- Child's best interest

## Features of ,the pre intervention, inefficient legal protection for children and the unfriendly justice system

- Cases of child victims handled by unspecialized police, prosecutors and judges who are not trained in Justice for children, children's rights or how to deal and communicate with victim children maximizes the risk of secondary trauma
- Child victims/survivors not receiving proper psychosocial and medical supports that facilitate safety and protection for the smooth proceedings of the legal procedures (eg. Shelter ( if there is a need to remove the child from the family in cases of incest or have no family or close relatives to be placed in), medical examination & proper counseling )
- Absence of legal aid for families and the child victims

# Features contd.

- Child victims being confronted with the perpetrator during the legal process causing threats not testify
- Child victims not assisted to be free from fear family breakdowns and social isolation if the offender is a relative and/or the breadwinner of the family
- Being exposed to repeated interviews and uncoordinated interagency protocols

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# Features contd.

- Victims required to produce witnesses that can corroborate the allegations. In the mean time the perpetrators may;
  - Find time to disappear
  - Substantial evidences may be lost/ hidden
  - The perpetrator may hamper any potential witnesses
  - The child victim may be exposed to harm that could be inflicted by the perpetrators if the police don't respond to reports of reasonable suspicion
- Legal procedures not as brief and speedy as possible and repeatedly going through the legal procedures could be a traumatic experience for the child victims

## Features contd.

- No clear guideline and procedure on how to deal with child victims in a child – sensitive manner during the court process
- No System of supervision to check the welfare and well being of child victims during and after the court process when the abuser is the parent or guardian of the child

# Intervention undertaken by FSCE

- The establishment of Child Protection Units and rescue centers for victims SAE and trafficking
- Training of police officers, prosecutors and Judges on Child Rights issues
- The establishment of child friendly courts (Victim Friendly Benches)-Setting up closed circuit TV system for child victims
- Training and deploying intermediaries
- Initiating a coalition of pertinent NGOs and GO organs forming a systematized referral structure (Multi-sectoral approach for the rehabilitation and protection of child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation)

# Why the Multi-sectoral Approach?

- The prevention, rehabilitation and protection of victims should not be considered as an isolated issues
- Child victim cases can only be successfully be brought to justice when coordination is ensured among different stakeholders, which include the police, prosecution office, court, medical institutions as well as institutions that provide social services to the children
- Multidisciplinary strategy, consistent with standards for the respect of children's rights, addresses the problem related to uncoordinated interagency protocols that child victims face in the legal sector
- Addressing the issues of funding, physical facilities and human resources

# How does it function?

**Building the capacity of the Police**

- Training on Child Rights, child case investigation
- Guidance and counseling
- Information recording
- Communication and interviewing skill



- Receiving cases in a child friendly manner
- Providing guidance and counseling for children and families
- Recording data in the data base
- Referring the case to Child Protection Unit

Quick and timely medical treatment and counseling confidentially

Create family type safe place/ for psychosocial recovery support center for children whose cases are under court trail

Intermediaries

Legal Aid

- Training on Child case investigation interrogation skill
- Closed circuit TV system for child victims

# Outcomes

- **Better coordinated approach among the various child focused institutions created for improved treatment of child victims of SAEC that includes the legal sector**
- **Conducive working relation environment for resource and knowledge sharing and cost effective social services provision and resource management has been created.**

# Key issues to be looked

- Community Participation
- Facilitation to encourage the reporting of CSEC related cases almost non existent



**Thank you!**